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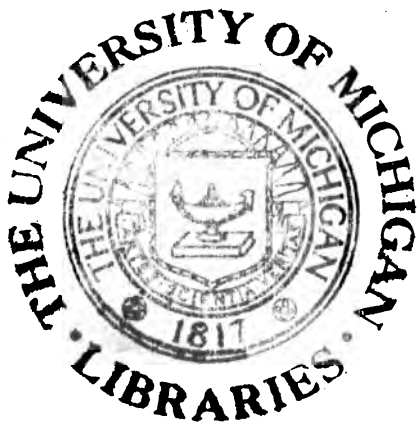
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THE SCHOOL HOUSE

— THE END —

SKETCHES
OF
MY SCHOOL-MATES.

BY H. P. W.

FRIENDS MY SOUL WITH JOY REMEMBERS !
HOW LIKE QUIVERING FLAMES THEY START,
WHEN I FAN THE LIVING EMBERS
ON THE HEARTH-STONE OF MY HEART.
Longfellow.



New-York :
PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & PHILLIPS,
SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.
1856.

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1113
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1856

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by
CARLTON & PHILLIPS,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern
District of New-York.

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SKETCHES OF MY SCHOOL-MATES.

CHAPTER I.

WINDMURMUR HILL.

For the dark resounding caverns,
Where thy still, small voice is heard ;
For the strong pines of the forest,
That by thy breath are stirr'd ;
For the storms, on whose free pinions
Thy spirit walks abroad ;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.—MRS. HEMANS.

IN the southern part of New-Hampshire is a retired farming town, whose western boundary is washed by the blue waters of the Merrimac. Over its uneven surface is spread a wild variety of rocky hills, forests, pastures, plains,

sheets of water and their tributary streams. These are now inwrought with the various improvements which its worthy inhabitants have made during the last one hundred and fifty years.

One of its highest and most notable eminences is Windmurmur Hill; and although in that state, which has not unfrequently been called the "Switzerland of America," it can never be distinguished for its height, yet it rises to an eminence which exceeds everything for miles in its vicinity, and commands an extensive view of the surrounding country. Far in the west and south it presents a dim outline of several cities, with their pointing steeples directing to heaven. And at the north and southwest may be seen the snowy cliffs of distant mountains. In the nearer prospect are spread out broad valleys, dark

and solitary forests, meadows, shining forth in their emerald beauty, and dotted over all are the sweet New-England homes, which ever smile forth so invitingly from their sylvan retreats; while winding far along by the western sky the quiet Merrimac, like a silver thread, pursues its way through rural haunt or dusty city.

At some places on the' sides of this hill it is dark at noonday with the shade of gigantic oaks and pines, which have stood there perhaps for ages; and at others there are pleasant openings and fruitful spots; while here and there are butternut and walnut trees, with wild grapes and apples, and springs of water, which nature has provided for those who wander among its wilds. All around and over it are winding paths, some of which lead to its summit, where

at its most lofty point is heaped up a large pile of rough stones. These have been thrown together by those who have visited the place. For it has been the practice from time immemorial, for all who go there for the first time, to throw upon this heap the memorial tribute of a stone.

Around the base of the hill are roads, which lead from one house to another. Some of these are through fields and pastures, and are not open to the public. There, among the sunny slopes and woodland trees, are nestled the homes of my earliest friends.

Five or six families belonged to this section of the school district, and of necessity were much in each other's society. The most of these families were large, and included in their numbers a goodly proportion of children. In our child-

hood we were much together. And O, what a merry company were we, during the summer and winter term of school, when each morning found us a happy group, increasing our number at every house on our way. This antique institution was situated in another part of the district. Out of deference to the architectural notions of the olden times, I will give it no other description than that it had a fine location in a pleasant valley, by the side of a small brook.*

This brook was the outlet of a lily pond, a few rods above, from which it wound its way to the river about a mile below. The water privileges here furnished were highly prized, and were the occasions of much childish enterprise; sometimes a youthful hero would make wonderful efforts to secure the

* See Frontispiece.

prize of a water lily, with which he would propitiate the favor of his teacher, or express his preference for some little girl. Again, the children would be engaged in the construction of bridges, wheels, fish-ponds, and miniature canals around the flume. Once this spirit of improvement was carried so far as to lead to the building of a dam quite across the brook. This, when finished, was looked upon with much pride, until the next morning, when sundry complaints were entered from the hay-makers, whose meadows above had been overflowed in the midst of haying time, and from the miller below, into whose pond the water had unceremoniously ceased to run the day before. Such complaints at the time were the cause of serious restrictions upon our valuable water-works.

Beyond the brook there was a fine grove of oaks ; by the gnarled roots of one, which stood at the foot of a hill, there gushed up an ever-living spring of water, which was very often frequented at recess and during our play hours.

On the other side of the road, a little beyond the hill, is a still, solemn place, where we never laughed and played, but walked as if the ground were holy, with soft and quiet steps, among the grassy mounds, and read upon tablets of marble and granite, date, and names, and ages, some of which would correspond with our own ; and then, with childish questionings, would wonder at the mystery of death, and look forward into the everlasting future with reverential awe. But we were much oftener found at our play than in the

grave-yard, and a large and happy school were we.

Dear, broken, scattered band, my heart goes forth in love and fond remembrance for you all, and cherishes that interest which is felt only for those with whom we have laughed and played, and mingled in the guileless hours of life's young day. But my thoughts are now dwelling upon the little class of girls who went from Windmurmur, with whom I studied my spelling-book, and sat upon the lowest seat in the old school-house. As our capacities increased, and our minds enlarged, we were promoted to the next higher seat, and so on until we took our long-desired place in the "back seat," where we were initiated into the principles of algebra, chemistry, and studied about the stars, and parsed in Pollock's "Course of

Time." But I am not now designing to speak of intellectual advancement, or the honors, or pleasures, or vicissitudes which my early friends have met in this changeful world.

My sketches will be confined to simple details of the work of grace in the hearts of a few retired disciples, whom the Spirit of the Lord has brought from the bondage of sin into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God.

The dealings of God with the human heart, and the discipline by which he molds and perfects it in his image, are always new proofs of his willingness to bless, to aid and assist, and to impart more than we can think or ask of his unspeakable gift.

In a review of His goodness in the conversion and the carrying on of the sanctifying process in the hearts of these

youthful believers, it is hoped that others may be led to receive Him who hath wrought out this glorious redemption ; and that, believing, they may trust in Him, and give Him the glory !

CHAPTER II.

NANCY GOODELL.

"Thy days were few and quickly told ;
Thy short and mournful story
Hath ended like the morning star,
That fades in deeper glory."

THERE is a green and shady road leading around the northern side of Windmurmur. As you enter it, and pass along in many places through orchards and fields of corn and clover, there are gates which must be opened and shut as you go from one inclosure to another. In one of its pleasantest turnings, where the sun shines the sweetest, and the air is the most bracing and pure, stands the cottage homestead of Daniel Goodell. A low-roofed house, simple in its rustic adornments, there it stands among the

apple-trees, with the birds singing about it, and the sweet-scented clover blooming up to its very threshold—an ideal of rural simplicity and peace. On its western side the apple-trees stand close by the window, and at the eastern corner stands a large butternut-tree, which shades the well, and then reaches forth its great arms protectingly toward the kitchen door, as if it would gladly shield its inmates from heat or tempest.

In this spot Mr. Goodell settled in early life; and a family of ten children rose up around him, would I could say, to call him blessed. But the fair scenes around his home, and the circle at his fireside, were often visited by a fell demon, who brought with him a legion of wicked spirits from the world of darkness, who stole away his comfort, and chilled the warm current of affection in

the hearts of his wife and children. This demon, who robbed him of his heart's best treasures, was *Intemperance*. And when, like the deceiving serpent, he first began his ruinous work, it was in a home of quiet and peace, where there was a family altar, and both parents were the professed disciples of Christ. But once admitted, he came again and again, till love was thrust out, and the father, lost to everything good, became a tyrant, cruel, murderous, and fiend-like. The peace-loving mother, to protect her own life and those of her children, was at length compelled to take legal steps to procure a separation. In this she was successful; and the light was put out in their once peaceful dwelling; the hearthstone became desolate, and the family were scattered.

Nancy Goodell was the youngest daughter of this wicked man. Her disposition by nature was timid and retiring. She was one of those sensitive and self-distrusting children who need urging forward, and a careful training of the intellect, in order that the mind may become strong enough to maintain its proper control over the tender and susceptible feelings of the heart. But Mrs. Goodell had many cares, and much trouble and anxiety in her family, and little time to spend in the education of her children; and thus the character of Nancy was left to be molded according to the circumstances in which she was placed. Her father became her great terror. She feared him at all times; and when he came into his house, infuriated to the phrensy of a madman, and raved around without rea-



THE DEPARTING FAMILY

son or mercy, Nancy, be the weather what it might, would shrink away into some shed or outhouse, where she would remain until her father's wrath was past; and when sought after, would be found hid in some dark corner, benumbed and trembling with cold or fear.

Domestic troubles affected the sensitive heart of the child in a powerful manner. They fell like a destroying blight upon the tender buds of joy and feeling, which else had flourished and bloomed in her pathway. Yet her childhood was not always unhappy. She clung to those whom she loved, and who loved her, in her family, and among her school-mates, with a strength of affection which was only the more fervent and sincere because it was limited to a few. In them she confided, and when with them she was happy.

When the family was broken up, she lived for a time with some older brothers and sisters, but at an early age she sought and found employment in one of the cotton mills of a neighboring city. She was thus thrown upon her own resources, and compelled to rely upon herself. Very lonely was she, when she commenced her work among strangers. Everything was new and strange to her, and the first few weeks seemed long, very long. In many respects her mind was unprepared to meet the trials to which she was exposed, with a spirit of fortitude. She felt desolate and alone. And oftentimes, when she looked across the blue waters of the river, and saw the sunlight falling so soft and pleasant on the happy homes beyond, she would think of her own low-roofed cottage among the trees, of what it was, and

what it might have been, and tears, un-availing tears, which bring no consolation, and afford no relief, would be, perhaps, for hours her portion. She was unreconciled in her heart with her lot, with the world, and with her God. As she formed new acquaintances, and they began to feel interested in each other's history, she would hear them occasionally speaking of her domestic troubles among themselves, and their remarks would fall like ice upon her too sensitive spirit. There was an unsatisfied want in her soul, a something which she lacked, and without which, if she had possessed the riches and friendship of the whole world, she would still have been unhappy. This she knew, and would sometimes look away to the bright and quiet skies, and as she watched the changing beauties of the

clouds, would wish that she had a friend in Jesus, and a home in heaven. She began to realize how sad a thing it is to be without God, and without hope in the world. Her mind was becoming disciplined to the reception of truth. Her religious privileges were superior to any which she had ever enjoyed before, and there were some of God's children who began to feel an interest for her; who took her kindly by the hand, and said, "Come with us, and we will do you good." Why did they? what was it which caused them to take an interest in this retiring stranger? It was the love of Christ constrained them. O, Christian sympathy and Christian effort, what have they not done, what are they not doing to bring poor ruined souls to the cross of Jesus! Well was it for Nancy that she fell in with those who

were working and living for heaven ; who were watching all opportunities to do something for Him, who had done so much for them. She found religion, and found it was just what she needed to bring peace to her soul ; just what she needed to reconcile all the seeming inequalities of life, and lead her to feel that her heavenly Father would remember and care for her. She was emphatically one of the little ones, little in light, in experience, in practice ; but the feelings of her heart were sometimes expressed in the hymn,

More worldly good I do not want,
Be that to others given ;
While only for thy love I pant,
My all in earth or heaven.

This is the crown I fain would seize,
With which I would be bless'd :
Redeemer, Saviour, seal my peace,
And take me to thy breast.

O, that all who are weary and heavy laden, whose hearts are smitten with sorrow, over whose social enjoyments hang dark and mysterious clouds, O, that they would all come and receive consolation from one who is acquainted with grief, and who so freely offers the joys that earth can never give.

After a few months of labor, Nancy began to feel that her health was failing, and that she must leave her employment for rest. Her constitution, by nature, was delicate, and she was predisposed to disease of the lungs. Though she did not feel that she had gone beyond her strength, yet there was a necessity of relaxation and exercise in the pure country air.

Three or four years were thus spent, alternating a few months of labor with rest, or attendance at school.

Meantime her mother had obtained legal possession of their old home, and had gathered around her such of her family as had not homes of their own.

When Nancy was about twenty years old, it became apparent that the symptoms of consumption were fast settling upon her ; one by one they stole in, and began the fearful work, "slow, sapping the warm current of existence." Winter and summer passed away in the application of remedies, and in fruitless medical treatment, for the removal of the disease ; but as winter approached again, all hope forever fled, and the prospect of death, only death, awaited her. Earthly hopes and wishes were now laid aside. Calmly and quietly she withdrew from them all, and could say, with the lamented Henry Kirke White,

32 SKETCHES OF MY SCHOOL-MATES.

"Henceforth, O world, no more of thy desires,
No more of hope—the wanton, vagrant hope!
I abjure all; now other cares engross me,
And my tired soul, with emulative haste,
Looks to its God, and plumes its wings for heaven."

The long and weary months of winter wore away, and her physical sufferings became very severe. Spring opened with its balmy air and swelling buds, but still her sufferings grew more intense, until they surpassed any which the most experienced in the neighborhood had ever witnessed, in this disease, before. Yet she bore them with uncomplaining submission; and, as the end drew near, she became more and more like a little child, and thus, by the very nature and effects of suffering, became more fully prepared to enter into the kingdom of heaven. With much simplicity she committed all into the hands of her heavenly Father. But

there was one earthly desire, submissive though it was, which still lingered in her soul ; it was that she might live till the apple-trees put forth their blossoms, and that with their bloom she might pass away. Strange that the King of glory, the Ruler of the universe, should regard the wishes, and listen to the half-breathed desires of his little ones ! Yet so it was with Nancy. She seemed to hang between life and death till the bright May days came. Anxious and loving hearts watched around her bed as she neared the eternal world. Often they thought her on the very verge of heaven, so near that she could almost catch a glimpse of its glories ; and then, again, she would linger in Death's dark valley, with its cold shades floating around her, as she gave another thought to friends and earth,

and another look to the apple-trees by the window, and sighed to behold, once more, their fragrance and bloom.

The earliest May flowers came and passed away ; the young leaves danced in the sunny air ; the violets opened their blue eyes by the brook, and the dandelions decked the green turf, as if there had fallen from the skies a shower of gold. The long-watched apple-buds were at length tinged with crimson, and here and there with streaks of white, which showed that they only waited a little more rain and sunshine ere the white petals would burst from these unfolded buds.

One day the air became particularly soft and bland ; the sun shone out with summer's heat, and the apple-blossoms came fully forth, and pitched their snowy tents all around her mother's door. They

covered the orchard, the yard, and, drooping over the window by her low bed, filled the room with fragrance. Over the earth there was wrought that day a beautiful change. Spring had reached the zenith of its splendor. That night the dying girl looked out upon the setting sun for the last time. She knew that she was taking a long farewell of earth. In the spring-time of its beauty she was taking the last look; in the spring-time of her life she was to lie down beneath the turf of the valley.

All night she breathed in the fragrance of those sweet flowers with which her brothers had arranged her room. Peaceful and happy were the hours of that last, still night. She had done with earth. Even the shadow of a desire to tarry had vanished; and

she waited the summons of the death-angel. It came at the opening of day:

“ And when the sun, in all its state,
Illumed the eastern skies,
She pass’d through glory’s morning gate,
And walk’d in Paradise!”

The next Sabbath morning there was a funeral in the little brown house among the trees. A shadow rested upon the entire neighborhood, and all felt, in a peculiar sense, that it was indeed a sanctified morning. In nature there was a sacred and tender stillness, which seemed almost to sympathize with human sorrow. The sun shone forth on the scenes of earth’s bloom and beauty with hallowed and quiet glory. Floating around in the soft, warm sky, were a few misty and white-wreathed clouds, which now and then sent forth a sprinkling of rain to mingle with the mourners’ tears.

At nine o'clock the neighbors came in until the house was filled. In the room where Nancy had died was seated the broken family circle. Even her erring father had come from a distance to pay the only tribute of regard which he could ever offer to his pious child. The coffin was placed on a table by the open window ; the muslin curtain was turned away, and the air, balmy and warm, came down over Windmurmur, and, touching the tops of the clover, stole through the apple blossoms to kiss the pale cheek of the sleeper. Then there arose the hymn, and the prayer, and holy words of consolation were spoken to breaking hearts ; the benediction followed, and the last look was given to the frail mortal dust—the last look, which withers and sinks the soul, till it is overflowed by the very

billows of woe. Then there was a pause, and silence, broken only by the half-suppressed sob, as that sad, soul-sinking inquiry was made, Whether all had "taken their leave of the dead?"

There was a movement made to close the coffin, but before it was carried away, there were scattered all over it a shower of snowy blossoms from the tree by the window.

When in her coffin lying,
The apple flowers unbound,
Came all about her flying,
Like snow flakes to the ground.

Like pearls those petals shining,
Bedeck'd her bosom fair,
And in a garland turning,
Shone with her chestnut hair.

They laid her down to her long rest in the grave-yard by the school-house. In a green and quiet place they made her grave. Near it, as spring after

spring passes away, the apple blossoms bloom, and fall and wither, while her spirit, which on earth had just begun to love the Saviour, now rests with him forever.

CHAPTER III.

CHARLOTTE MORRISON.

O happy day that fix'd my choice
 On thee, my Saviour and my God!
 Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
 And tell its raptures all abroad.

Now rest, my long divided heart;
 Fix'd on this blissful center, rest.
 With others who would grudge to part,
 When call'd on angel's bread to feast?

High heaven, that heard my solemn vow,
 That vow renew'd shall daily hear,
 Till in life's latest hour I bow,
 And bless in death a bond so dear.

DODDRIDGE.

DIRECTLY in front of the steepest side of Windmurmur, is a large ancestral house, which stands where some early settler, fancying the location in the then "pathless woods," came and established

his simple habitation. Elm-trees are now before the house, and around it are cultivated fields and orchards. The family residing there is large, and embraces among its members some who are now scattered in the most distant states of the Union. The parents, on the mother's side of the New-England Puritan, and on the father's of the old Scottish Presbyterian lineage, possessed that moral integrity and uprightness which never fail to command respect. Thoroughly versed in the evangelical doctrines of Christianity, they received them through the Bible, as the only rule of faith and practice. Still they never publicly professed their faith in God, or an experimental knowledge of his forgiving mercy.

As soon as their children were capable of receiving instruction, they were

taught the awful consequences of sin and disobedience, and the anger which a just God ever felt toward it. The mother also taught them morning and evening prayers, and hymns, and Scriptural lessons suited to their infantile minds. But as childhood merged into youth, and youth passed to riper years, she left them to the power of truth, and the influences of the Spirit, to create and mold their religious characters aright. Though Mrs. Morrison could speak of the historic interest, or the poetic beauty, or the doctrinal sublimity of the divine revelation, yet the subject of personal interest, and experience in the forgiving mercy of God, was approached by her with much of embarrassment. This would doubtless have been otherwise had she, in early life, professed that love for her Saviour which she felt in

her soul, and publicly owned him by uniting with his visible followers.

As years passed, the elder members of the family, brothers and sisters, left the parental roof, and other little ones took their places. Among these was the subject of this sketch. Charlotte was the ninth of twelve children. The recollections of childhood were to her naught but sunny memories. Of a quiet, contented disposition, she could conceive of no happier lot, than to roam through the woods and pastures with her young companions; or to sit within doors, engaged in some childish occupation, with the love-light of her mother's eye resting upon them with an approving smile. In the spring of 18—, the Lord by his Spirit directed some of his servants to go and labor in the neighborhood, near which Charlotte's parents

resided. These devoted men were ministers of the Methodist Church, and the Lord who sent them forth owned and blessed their labors. Strong men and youthful maidens, sober matrons and wild, headstrong youth, all came, and, through the stirring and powerful influence of the truth, and of the Spirit of God, covenanted together to live henceforth in the service of their divine Master. Thus a class was formed, which, in time, being duly organized, became the foundation of the Church in that town. At this time Charlotte was between ten and eleven years of age, and occasionally, on a pleasant spring evening, she was permitted, in company with others, to go to the old school-house to attend these meetings. The stirring appeals to which she there listened, awoke the inner depths of her soul; she

longed to become in reality what her conscience pictured to her imagination she ought to be, a pure and devoted follower of the Lord Jesus. But she thought what would my parent, what would my older brothers and sisters say, if I, so young, should present myself among the anxious ones as a seeker of salvation? Then she quieted her conscience with the thought, that when she became older—when she became a woman—she would care for none of these things; *then* she would be a Christian. Poor child! she had yet to learn that it is the love of God, not years, that puts to flight the fear of man. Little did she know the strength of that web which the enemy of her soul would weave around her during the years that should follow; the habits, almost as strong as death, that would be formed;

the alluring but self-delusive sentiments which she would imbibe. Now it would have been comparatively easy for her to begin, with God's blessing, to live aright. But in after years how much harder, those only know who have, like her, delayed and trifled with the first teachings of the Spirit. O, that some kind Christian friend, some watcher for Jesus, had been near to have gently led her into the path of safety. Then might she have been spared many hours of weariness, and days of bitter struggle in after life, ere she obtained that self-conquest so necessary to a well-balanced character.

Years passed away, and again the Spirit of the Lord visited the town, in all its subduing power, and happy souls were born into the kingdom. Charlotte is now fifteen. But will she listen to

the voice of truth within her soul ? or does she still think that the time has not yet come for her to be a Christian ? Yes, she listened to the voice of God calling her, and she knew full well that *now* was the accepted time. She thought, and she believed herself sincere, that she was now willing to own the Saviour before men—willing to take up her cross daily, might she only be permitted to follow him as one of his disciples. But let us stop for a moment, and glance at the influences that have been molding her character during the four years just past. In the midst of her companions at school, her intellect had been well trained and developed ; while at home, and in the Sabbath school, principles of morality and religion had been instilled into her young mind ; “ Line upon line, precept upon

precept" had been given. But her heart's sanctuary had not been opened to the call of her Saviour in early youth, and his indwelling presence was not with her, to shield from the tempter's power. Thus, with the good seed sown, the enemy had also sown his tares; and at the age of fifteen, we find the one all-absorbing desire of her soul to be a passion for fictitious reading. She had put this unholy fruit to her lips, and, like our first parents, had found it sweet to the taste. The effect of this reading was not to undermine the uprightness and purity of her mind; for no works of a demoralizing nature came within her reach; and had they her sense of moral purity and goodness would have led her to cast them from her as unworthy of perusal. But though these works with which she was now so con-

versant had no direct immoral tendency, yet they warped and distorted the truth, and gave her wrong ideas of the realities of life. To her, the struggle between vice and virtue was but a fanciful and romantic conflict. Even the self-denying labors, the trials and conflicts she knew to be the portion of the people of God, were, to her excited imagination, encircled with a halo of romance, whose captivating enchantment made her, as she saw them in the distance, eager to embrace them. Living so much in the ideal, and being so deeply absorbed in its fancied beauties, unfitted her to engage heartily in the common and practical duties which the real in life imposed upon her, and led her, O how widely, from the narrow way which leads to life. And now, as she saw one and another of her friends,

who had consecrated their lives to their Redeemer's service, she saw only the hallowed beauty of such a consecration, and considering not the price at which it was bought, she readily replied, "I go," as she heard the voice of her Master calling her to labor in his vineyard. And now she was diligent in the use of the means of grace. Meetings for prayer and religious conversation were attended, and it was known not only to the people of God, but among her associates, some of whom united with her, that she was inquiring after the way of salvation. It was not the will of God, at this time, to visit her with overwhelming views of her own sinfulness, and thus, as it were, compel her to flee to the Saviour for rest; but she was led in such a way, that she could not deny the reasonableness of the service required, and, with a

seeming spirit of willing obedience, she began to search for the pearl of great price. But, as before stated, she viewed the duties of religion in a false light, and the cross, which in the distance was clothed with such fancied beauty, upon nearer approach became huge and unshapely. And though she resolved and promised, and that, too, before her God, to seek until she should find, yet she acted not up to these resolves, nor to the light which was given her. The warning voice of the Spirit pleaded long, but the suggestions of the tempter were too frequently listened to, and in time she yielded to their power. She would have shuddered at the thought of refusing the offer of mercy held out to her; but as time wore on, she ceased to struggle against her foes, and the Spirit, grieved at her sinful waywardness, left

her to her own course, to neglect again for years this great salvation. Sadly turning again to the world for happiness, she half persuaded herself that there was no change of heart, except that which comes from long years of patience and experience. And then, the thought that the doctrine of the final restoration of man to the image of his Maker *after death* might be true, would creep in with its insinuating poison.

But think you, my readers, that she was satisfied and happy in this condition? Ask your own heart if it finds rest, happiness in that which is unreal; if it finds peace and quiet in the things of this world, upon which are so continually written *change and death*. No, Charlotte was not satisfied with herself, and at peace with her conscience and her God; therefore she could not be

happy. Though she tried to persuade herself that all was right within, and that she was safe, yet there was at times a "fearful looking for of judgment." The future was indeed dark before her. She had no anchor to the soul, which was "sure and steadfast;" no "rod and staff" upon which to lean, were she called to pass through the dark valley. O, the depth of the riches of forbearing grace, which cast her not off forever in her perversity.

As months rolled on, she could not but feel that wrong habits and selfish motives were gaining the ascendancy over her, and she felt herself powerless to contend successfully against them. She now began to question the position she had taken, and to ask if human power was able to cope with and overcome the deep depravity of the human

heart. Convinced that it was not, she resolved to set apart a portion of each day, in which she would retire to her chamber, and ask for divine blessings and aid. Though she was faithful to these resolves, she did not make the progress she expected, for she depended on her own strength, and not on the aid which she supplicated from on high. She knew not then how to exercise that appropriating faith which brings the blessing to the soul. Three months passed thus, and she was soon to enter upon another year of her earthly existence, seventeen having nearly passed away.

About this time a sad providence occurred in the neighborhood; an aged, but devoted minister of Christ, came with the consolations of religion to bind up the broken-hearted, and to preach

deliverance to the captives of sin and Satan. A series of weekly meetings were now held at the house of an aged handmaid of the Lord, one who had served him upward of half a century, and whose doors were always open for the proclamation of the words of truth. More than one sorrowing penitent had there been led to the foot of the cross, while songs of holy triumph, for souls redeemed, have ascended from that kitchen hearthstone. Charlotte was among a little company of ready listeners assembled in that humble, but consecrated room. At the close of the service an invitation was given for all who desired the prayers of God's people to manifest it by rising. Charlotte did desire such prayers, earnestly, sincerely; but she remembered the time when she had deceived her own soul

and the people of God, and presented herself as a penitent once before. She remembered, too, how her apparent goodness had all passed away, like the "morning cloud and the early dew," and so she remained quiet in the retired part of the room where she was seated, locking within her own breast the despairing sorrow which oppressed her. A silence ensued, and then, with the remark that the same opportunity would be given the next week, the man of God closed the services. In leaving the house he passed a group of young ladies, and, pausing for an instant, said, "Remember the opportunity you will have next week, and consider the subject well." To Charlotte, this was a word fitly spoken; and as she slowly wended her way homeward, she resolved that the coming week should be one of

earnest deliberation, for she felt that the condition of her whole after existence depended upon the decision she should then make. As circumstances would permit, she sought the secrecy of her own chamber, where, hour after hour, she sat communing with her own heart. As busy memory would look back into the past, it was with pain and regret that she recalled the course she had pursued; and full well did she know that the skeptical doubts that had been gathering around and darkening her spiritual vision, during the three years now past, would greatly impede her progress in the search of truth. If the religion of the Cross is indeed the religion of the Bible, what madness, thought she, to let any earthly consideration prevent me from embracing it.

At length she resolved, in the strength

of heaven, to be the Lord's, fully, deliberately, in view of all the trials and obstacles in her way. Though the way of life was then to her an untrodden way, and to her darkened vision faith was a shadow and not a substance. Then went she forth, and in the strength of the Almighty took the first public step in the new life she was to lead, saying, by her act, that she desired an interest in the prayers of the little circle around her. A time of desolation and darkness ensued, a feeling that she was alone: she had forsaken the world, but had not found the Saviour. But she was not left long to struggle in darkness, with temptations and fears; for, though she knew it not, He who suffered as never man suffered, was near to pity and encourage. At the hallowed twilight hour, when bowing in

utter helplessness, and renouncing self, he first revealed himself to her spiritually as a God not "afar off."

The view of Christ as *her* Saviour melted her heart, and tears of joy mingled with glad outpouring praise as she began to comprehend a little of that infinite love which had taken her feet from the "horrible pit and the miry clay." How did she rejoice to lay her all at his feet, a willing offering. As her emotions in view of her sinfulness had not been overpowering, neither were those of joy at a sense of forgiveness. The witness of the Spirit was not fully given at this time; but a soft, hazy light, pervaded her inner being, which she used sometimes to describe by comparing it to the light of the beautiful Indian summer of early November, with which we were then visited.

It was on the evening of her eighteenth birthday that she first spoke to us of the new hope that had dawned upon her soul. This was at a class-meeting, held at the close of one of the meetings before referred to. Never shall I forget how she arose, when called upon, and, with a voice slightly tremulous with emotion, told us how she had heard the voice of her Saviour whisper, "Fear not : for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine."

On the first day of the ensuing spring she came forward, with a sister, who had received a like precious hope, and together they covenanted with their God to "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world," and henceforth to keep his holy will and commandment, and to walk in



THE DUTY

the same all the days of their lives ; and, kneeling at the altar, received holy baptism, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

From this time her course was gradually onward and upward. Her affections were now directed into the right channel. To be sure, there was much around her to draw her earthward, but she knew in whom she had believed, and went forward, patiently struggling with her contending foes. At an early period in her religious life she learned, by experience, that there could be no steady growth of grace without daily reading of the Scriptures, and such stated seasons of retirement, for private devotions, as circumstances would permit. She also adopted a course of systematic beneficence, which proved to be a valued means of grace, and an inex-

haustible source of doing good. As she became more strongly confirmed in the truths of God's word, she was enabled to see and embrace the great central doctrine of our holy religion, that of the attainability of purity of heart, by receiving Christ as a present, all-sufficient Saviour, who saves to the uttermost all who receive him in the spirit of loving, obedient consecration. This gave new interest to her spiritual life. And with this belief, that she might, while yet upon earth, enter that beautiful land, "where the birds sing so sweetly, and where the sun never sets," there came new energy and power to press forward toward the mark.

Though naturally of a retired and contemplative disposition, she held herself in readiness to discharge every active duty required of her; and thus she

became efficient and practical in all the relations of home, friendship, and society.

The last time I heard her speak of herself, she was rejoicing in the hope set before her ; confident that He who had begun the great work in her soul, was able to carry it on. Said she, "From the advanced age to which my ancestors lived, and from the strength and vigor of my own constitution, I expect a long life ; and my great desire is, that its influence may all be given to my Redeemer's cause : and I expect, when I come to the waters of the Jordan, that there will be light on that dark river ; for the Saviour will be there, and O, how blessed to rest with him, when my journeyings are all past." I trust she is one who will be faithful to her charge, and follow her Lord through evil and through good report.

CHAPTER IV.

PAULINA MORRISON.

"'Twas thus by the light of false science betray'd,
Which leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind."

CHARLOTTE and Paulina Morrison were sisters, and so great was the resemblance between them, that one was frequently mistaken for the other. From childhood, their joys and sorrows were one. Their books, the schools and meetings they attended, the chamber they occupied, even their thoughts and principles, might be said to be always the same. The influences which affected one, affected the other also. This was particularly true in regard to religious things; for they were impressed, awakened, and finally converted under the

same circumstances. Their experience, before and after conversion, is so intertwined and knit together, that one sketch might almost answer for both. But the operations of grace are such, that in the individual experience of every Christian, there is always something peculiar. Charlotte had a strong mind, a persevering will, and was serious, consistent, and faithful to conviction. Paulina was ardent, impulsive, playful, sensitive, quick, enthusiastic in all she undertook, and had, withal, an intuitive perception of whatsoever was beautiful.

As might be supposed, from such a combination of qualities, the truths of religion wrought powerfully upon her impressible mind. But up to the age of sixteen, these religious impressions were changeful and evanescent. She

then came under the influence of a pious teacher, and was almost persuaded to be a Christian. The Spirit enlightened the work begun. Preparation was made, and good seed was sown, which afterward sprung up and bore fruit, when he who had sowed in tears and prayer had gone down to an early grave.

But she had not become confirmed in faith, when other influences counteracted the awakenings of the Spirit, and she turned away from the living fountain, to satisfy her soul's immortal thirst at the broken cisterns of man's invention.

When not at school, her opportunities for self-culture were good. She had a fondness for books, and allowed herself a generous proportion of light reading, including the best poetic and prose works of standard authors.

As time passed on, false lights led her gradually to the conclusion that she loved her God, and enjoyed religion, and that, too, in its most inviting and beautiful form ; for she had adopted the rationalistic views which were entertained by some of her family. In these she greatly delighted. They exactly met the natural desires and wants of her heart, and appeared so elevated, so ennobling to human nature, and clothed the soul with such dignity, that they won her admiration and belief. She read, nay, studied the works of Dr. Channing, and others of his school, until evangelical doctrines appeared bigoted and narrow ; and she could see no foundation for the doctrine of the atonement, no propitiation for sin, no Deity in Christ.

But in her inmost soul she was not

always satisfied with this belief. There would be times when, in deep and earnest prayer, she would feel the want of a "daysman" to stand between her erring soul and the awful majesty of the Most High; and this unuttered, unsatisfied want, would silently call for the Saviour. And there were other voices, still and small, which were ever pleading for Christ. They were whispered from treasured holy texts, and from the sacred influences of other days. Everywhere, within and without, this want was felt. Even from the world of spirits, there would come a haunting tone to recall the neglected teachings which she had received in the name of the Saviour. In fine, she had no true and real peace. And when the meetings commenced, which have been mentioned before, she heard the voice of

the Saviour saying, "Follow me," and she arose and "followed him." A change came over her spirit, and yet she could not tell the day nor the week when the change was wrought. But when Charlotte was deliberating in her chamber, and literally counting the cost, Paulina, with her usual ardor, had grasped the Christian's hope, and with a heart joyous and happy, was singing the glad new song. Sing on, thou happy convert; thy trial-time will come, when Satan will desire to "have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat," and when the bridegroom has departed, then mayest thou fast and mourn.

Soon after her conversion, she adopted three practical habits, which were of great profit to her soul. The first was, always to attend to the means of grace, unless providentially prevented. Attention to

these means was never to be submitted to the decisions of caprice or inclination. The second was, to detach herself from such reading as would not further her in the divine life, and to surround herself with a holy and sanctified literature. The third was, to adopt a systematic and Scriptural method of giving back to God a proportion of the rewards of her industry: for she judged that she could not consecrate all to Christ, and leave the matter of giving to be decided as circumstances or impulse should dictate, any more than she could maintain a spirit to "pray without ceasing," and still have no stated seasons of devotion; so she formed a little consecrated treasury, where she deposited her tithes, sometimes her double tithe, according as she was prospered. Thus she had constantly on hand a fund for the Lord,

which she could draw upon as calls for benevolence were made. A steady adhesion to the Bible teaching on this point, proved to her to be a perennial source of pleasure, where her woman's heart could continually delight itself in the "luxury of doing good."

The practice of these habits caused her considerable self-denial. And in order to carry them out, she had often to turn away resolutely from some plausible self-indulgence, some pleasing book, or inviting article of taste or comfort. Yet she steadfastly persevered, and they were like pillars to support the spiritual edifice which was being built up in her soul. In seasons of doubt and darkness they bore up, as it were, the spiritual temple, until the Lord should come and take entire possession.

After a year or two of her new life had passed away, she was providentially thrown into the society of many who were gay and thoughtless, and was so situated, that those with whom she was most intimate were strangers to a Saviour's love. But, instead of being doubly watchful, lest she should depart from the narrow way, she became irresolute in resisting temptation, and her influence for religion and Jesus was greatly weakened.

Then came a return-tide of old sentiment and theories, and the enemy insinuated his way into her soul, till the image of Christ was destroyed, and her evidences of adoption departed. She was sensible of her loss, and of her perilous position, but seemed powerless to resist evil. It would be neither pleasure nor profit to follow her through

all her wanderings, in doubt and darkness, and dwell upon the entanglements and difficulties into which she was led. Suffice it to say, that externally she attended to the duties of religion, but at heart was weak and faithless; like one who is physically paralyzed, but mentally sensible of his lack of power.

At length her disquieted and doubting spirit became heartily wearied of its wanderings and weakness, and she began to look upon her spiritual enemies as something to be grappled with, or they would lead her on to certain destruction. She now found that the mischief which she had done to her own soul, when she had studied to destroy her belief in the atoning power of Jesus, *must* be repaired. Her doubts and false views must be faithfully met and answered. Error must give place

to the truth. And her faith, if it was ever confirmed, must be established upon truthful Bible evidence. She now began to search into the mysteries of the Gospel. The great plan of redemption, the nature, offices, mission, and death of Christ, were made her constant, indeed her almost only theme of study and thought. Searching the Scripture with the helps she could obtain, and prayer, were the principal means through which she sought the truth. While yet she was searching, as it were for life, it was her privilege to spend a week with God's people in the tented grove, where this spiritual conflict was brought to a crisis. It was a week of terrible struggling, but, blessed be God, it was a week of victory, too. Four days of the meeting had passed away, and the fifth arose clear and beautiful upon the

worshiping host. The sunlight stole through the whispering leaves, and rested upon the snowy tents like a father's blessing. But all this loveliness fell upon her sad and disquieted heart like a silent rebuke, as she went forth in that leafy temple, and knelt at the altar with a great multitude, who were seeking a deeper work of grace. And there the truth, as it is in Jesus, was received into her heart, and she was united to him by a new and living faith. She received an unclouded witness of her acceptance through him, and gained new and powerful views of all his offices of redeeming love. Her soul was deeply tranquilized and overshadowed by that

“Sacred awe that dares not move,
And all that silent heaven of love.”

Her tired spirit now rested secure

and peaceful upon that all-glorious and "blissful center." She had now found the long-desired object of her faith, a real and life-giving presence, and received from thence an invigorating motive power. And in after life, whatsoever were her toils or conflicts, her comforts or victories, she never again lost sight of the "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" but pressed her way on with renewed ardor, adopting as her own the reflections and resolves of another:

I have done at length with dreaming;
Henceforth, O thou soul of mine,
Thou must take up sword and gauntlet,
Waging warfare most divine.

Life is struggle, combat, victory;
Wherefore have I slumber'd on,
With my forces all unmarshal'd,
With my weapons all undrawn?

O, how many a glorious record,
Had the angels of me kept,

Had I done, instead of doubted,
Had I warr'd, instead of wept.

Yet, my soul, look not behind thee,
Thou hast work to do at last;
Let the brave toil of the present,
Overreach the crumbled past.

Build thy great acts high and higher,
Build them on the conquer'd sod,
Where thy weakness first fell bleeding,
And thy first prayer rose to God.

CHAPTER V.

JENNIE DANIELS.

The blessing of her quiet life,
Fell on us like the dew ;
And good thoughts where her footsteps press'd
Like fairy blossoms grew.

Sweet promptings unto kindest deeds,
Were in her very look ;
We read her face as one who reads
A true and holy book.—J. G. WHITTIER.

IN the subject of this sketch we have a living, lovely example, of the power of religion to mold and shape the character in early life.

Jennie was the youngest daughter in a family where there were ten children. Six of her brothers and sisters had been laid in the grave before she was old enough to realize her loss. The

death of these children had caused the mind of her mother to become deeply spiritual; and as her little daughter was her constant companion, her mind was early imbued with a rich infusion of religious truth. These heavenly influences fell upon her spirit like the dews of heaven upon orchard blossoms, bringing forth grace and beauty, even before the fruit has taken its embryo shape.

Early was she taught the fallacy of earthly hopes, and most sincerely did she believe this life to be only the probationary preparation of a deathless life to come. But not until her thirteenth year did she feel her utter destitution without the pearl of great price. Her mind was then thoroughly awakened to a sense of her spiritual danger, and she became an earnest seeker of the wash-

ing of the regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. About this time, some good Christian brethren, from the city across the river, had commenced a series of meetings in a neighboring school-house. Jennie gladly availed herself of these means of grace, and evening after evening presented herself at this humble altar as a seeking penitent.

“The way, and the truth, and the life,” had not been revealed to her, when, one evening, it became strongly impressed upon her mind that that was the last struggle the convicting Spirit would ever hold with her ungrateful and unbelieving heart. Through all the exercises of that meeting she made much effort to believe, and expected momentarily a great and signal change, which, like a sign from heaven, would

establish her as one of the children of God, and answer to the idea of the blessing which she had formed in her imagination. But the kind counsels were all given, importunate prayers were offered, and the meeting was dismissed, without any change in her still distressed heart. Almost in despair, she turned her steps homeward.

The road she was to pass was about a mile in length, and led through a large forest and meadow, from the school-house to Windmurmur. It was early spring, and the long April days were just weaving a green carpet over the meadow, and adorning the branches of the trees with a leafy dress. The whip-poor-will's song was heard in the woods; and the bell-like music of the frogs in the meadow, fell upon the ear of the contrite one in mournful strains.

She separated herself from the little company, who came with her to the house of prayer, and walked in silence by the side of Anna Burnet, who, three years before, had given her heart to the Lord.

Jennie's heart was now completely subdued. The means of grace in which she had hoped to find rest were passed; all that Christian friends could do for her had been done; and the arm of flesh was removed. Deeply humbled and subdued, she communed earnestly and fervently with her God. The inmost thoughts of her heart were laid open before him. She began to realize that he was not only a God afar off, whose home was beyond the glittering stars, but that he was a God at hand, all around and near her, willing to accept her then—a present Saviour.

Most sincerely did she ask that she might not be left in darkness, but be guided to the truth. Even then he was leading her to know what the truth in Jesus was, and how to believe on him as *her* Redeemer.

Faith in Jesus took possession of her soul; instead of darkness it became all light; and with wondering surprise she saw that her condemnation was taken away; her fears were gone; and the love of God, shed abroad in her heart, filled her entire being with joy and peace. She spoke to Anna, and her words were the lisplings of the language of Canaan. Her bounding heart could now sympathize with the loveliness of that April evening; the fresh, warm breeze, appeared to waft about her the loving Spirit which she had feared was about to take its everlasting flight, and

the whole forest seemed to be vocal with the praises of her God.

That night the angels of heaven, and the hearts of God's children on earth, rejoiced together over the new-born soul just ushered into the family of Jesus.

Some time passed away before she united with the Church. She then gathered strength to go forward at a quarterly meeting, which was held on a Saturday afternoon, at the little church in the place. It was near sunset, one of the loveliest days in June, when a chosen band of the friends of the Saviour were gathered around a little sheet of water, which lies nestled in a grove of forest trees, which stand near, and half shade the house of God. The light breath of summer just moved among the leaves, and ruffled the reflection of the shining clouds in the

water below, as the voice of singing and prayer was borne upward to heaven. Here this young convert covenanted with her God, before angels and men, and received the baptismal seal, in the name of the "Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

At the age of nineteen, Jennie was united in marriage with one who had been her playmate and friend for years. But in a few months the strong hand of disease was laid upon the young husband, and he went down to an early grave. Through all the scenes of his sickness and death, she was sustained by an Almighty power, who was her refuge and her strength, and could say, with the spirit of acquiescing submission, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." He doeth all things well. "Let him do as seemeth him good."

But when these exciting scenes were all past, and the stricken bride was again enfolded in the bosom of her father's family, with nothing to remind her of her buried love but the little mementoes of affection which they had exchanged in their happiest days, when weeks and months wore away, and still she felt more and more how deep was the vacancy which death had made; *then* there came a more searching test of her faith. Sorrow and despondency now rested like a silent weight upon that steadfast and triumphant trust, which before had upborne her soul; and the temptations of the accusing enemy of souls came in upon her like a tide. While she was in this frame of mind, quarterly meeting occurred. As the solemn service of the Sacrament was about to commence, those who felt no

interest in religion began to pass out of the house. Satan now whispered to this already tempted one, that she was unworthy to remain, and ought not to eat condemnation to her soul. She hesitated for an instant, then yielded, and with the enemies of her Saviour went away. As she passed the altar on her way out, tears filled her eyes, as she thought of the three happy years in which she had there received comfort and strength. When she closed the door, the tactics of the enemy were again turned against her, and were mingled with such an overwhelming sense of her guilt, in thus denying her Lord, as almost to crush her to the ground. Now followed a season of utter darkness. All comfort departed. And the eye of the Saviour's love, in whose presence she had so delighted to move,

was closed against her. She could not forgive herself, and the idea of that sin "which hath never forgiveness," haunted her day and night. And thus shut out from hope and the presence of God, she struggled on in temptation and darkness. For weeks and months this terrible conflict continued, till, like a wearied and sobbing child, she at length found rest and pity where the tried and tempted are ever safe, in the sheltering bosom of her Saviour. ●

Thoroughly purged, like gold refined, her faith now shone forth clear and steadfast. She has learned, by sad experience, that it is a fearful thing to depart from the living God, and grieve his gentle Spirit. Though she commenced so early in his service, and thus escaped many of the snares which are spread in the broad way, yet we see

that trials and discipline were needful, ere she was fully established in his work.

Do you ask, where is Jennie now? and what was her mission in after years? You may find her in the Christian woman's sanctuary, the hallowed sphere of home. The morning light and the evening star in her father's house. Now gliding like an angel of love around the couch of a suffering mother; now cheering and strengthening the faltering faith of her gray-haired father; her sister's delight, her brother's counsellor and guide. In the community where she lives, loving and beloved. The friend of the poor; the companion of the good; the guiding elder sister of the orphan; the comforter of the sick and afflicted. Faithful to herself, to the Church, and to the world,

she is just the one whom everybody trusts and loves ; whom you would love to greet in the house of God, in the social meeting, or in the parlor of a friend. One in whose gentle and quiet presence you may be, and love to be there, just as you are in the sunshine, without knowing what it is that makes you happy.

CHAPTER VI.

ANNA BURNET.

"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flower to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set, but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O death.

"Youth and the opening rose,
May look like things too glorious for decay,
And smile at thee; but thou art not of those
That wait the ripen'd bloom to seize their prey.

"We know when moons shall wane,
When summer birds from far shall cross the sea,
When autumn's hue shall tinge the golden grain,
But who shall teach us when to look for thee?"

ANNA BURNET was an orphan. Her home, from her infancy, was with an aunt and grandmother. Her isolated position, in childhood's years, might be considered as somewhat lonely, when contrasted with that of others in the

large families which dwelt in the vicinity ; for there are joys, and sorrows, and heartfelt interests, and sympathies in the home that is filled with children, which the only child of a household never knows. And thus, partly from necessity, and partly from inclination, Anna, became a sober and reflecting child.

When she was about thirteen years old, there was a revival of religion in another part of the town, but the Spirit of conviction sought her out. Religious truth was no sooner revealed to her mind than it was believed, and sank like good seed into an honest heart. She was attending the summer term of school at the time, and soon it was whispered around that Anna was "serious." She was then looked upon with curiosity by the rest, as she was

the first of our number who had ever become interested in religion, yet she was not prevented by this from urging her way on, alone, and in a measure uninstructed. A number of days she sought her God in darkness and tears. Lost, and unhappy in her sins, that orphaned one was thirsting to find her God, to make him her friend, and to seek from him forgiveness, and a new heart. One day she was praying in her chamber, her little chamber, whose only window opened to the west, and beneath which the brook murmured along over rocks, and away, in the green pastures beyond, hid itself in the beds of wild peppermint and spearmint, which almost obstructed its course. There, by the open window, she prayed, and not to an unwilling ear. The light from heaven stole in upon her soul.

She saw that the forgiving Saviour had borne her sins ; her weight of guilt was removed ; peace, sweet peace, took possession of her soul, and she went forth to take her place in the school, and to perform life's duties, happy in her new-found rest.

Soon she was numbered with the children of God, and put on Christ by baptism. All this was looked upon by her school-mates with childish wonder. Sometimes some of us would go to her, perhaps with the spirit of the Pharisees when they went to the blind man whom Christ had healed, and said, "What did he unto thee? how opened he thine eyes?" But these truths flesh and blood could not reveal to our earthly minds, for they are spiritually discerned.

Years passed away, and she became



VISIT TO THE HILLS

a wife and mother, but still lived in the neighborhood. Three little playful girls gladdened her home, and a dark-eyed boy had just been laid, like a tender bud, upon its mother's bosom, when I stepped in, one winter's evening, to say "Good-by," ere I left the place for a season. The domestic happiness of the family at this time seemed to be complete. The one drop had been added which caused their cup to overflow. Anna felt this, and yet she would say, sorrow must sooner or later be their lot; none were exempted from it on earth: their turn must come.

The next summer I returned, and called upon them again. The children were as happy and as playful as before. But the mother, I saw by her hectic flush, her cough, and her faltering step, was sealed for the grave.

Not many days had passed away before word came that the scarlet fever had made its appearance in this family. It was a beautiful Sabbath morning, and I turned my course from church to the house of sickness. Little Ellen, about five years old, was then in the first stages of the fever. All that day and night we watched the course of the disease, as the heated blood rushed through her veins, and marked, with livid spots, her beautiful form. The next day she had few lucid moments. In her delirious fancies she sometimes thought herself in school, and seemed striving for a "perfect ticket." O that striving and thirsting after perfection! Soon was it to be satisfied in the fullness of the fountain. Soon her restless limbs became still; her eyes were closed forever upon earth, and, in her

white robe, with rose-buds in her hands, she was laid down to rest in the still, cold grave, to awake in the school of Christ.

The other little girls were attacked by the same disease, and, after a severe struggle, gradually recovered. But the babe, the sweet, dark-eyed boy, began to pine and droop. A few weeks he languished, and the white-winged angel of death again hovered over the household. The last day of his little life was passing, and the kind friends of Windmurmur came in to offer some word of sympathy, or to perform some office of love.

As evening closed in, one after another of the young people chanced to call at Mrs. Morrison's, near by. As they grouped in the parlor, or tarried in the shade of the elms, there were, as

there was wont to be, smiles and playful words, and songs, and music. At length some one proposed singing these words :

“THE REAPER.

“There is a reaper, whose name is Death,
And with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

“Shall I have naught that is fair ? saith he,
Have naught but the bearded grain ?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again.

“He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kiss’d their drooping leaves ;
It was for the Lord of Paradise,
He bound them in his sheaves.

“My Lord has need of these flow’rets gay,
The reaper said, and smiled ;
Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.

“They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.

"And the mother gave in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again,
In the fields of light above.

"O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away."

Scarcely had the echo of the sweet but mournful chant died away, and the subdued impression which followed had scarcely been broken, as all were thinking of the scene of death then transpiring so near, when word came that the babe was dead. Even while they were singing, the Reaper had kissed those drooping leaves, and borne the flower away.

A year has passed since I called upon that family, and found them so full of happiness and health. Now, two of the little ones have crossed the tide, and

the mother is just on the brink, looking across the river which has no bridge. But how is it with her now? Does she still trust in the God of her childhood? Is that Saviour near who, years ago, in her little chamber, spoke peace to her soul? Yes, he is near, very near; her refuge and strength in this her "time of trouble." She is looking back with gratitude to the time when she made God her choice in her early days. Her feeble voice is fast sinking to the grave; but her earnest desire and prayer for the young is, that they may seek God early, and serve him in the strength and vigor of their days. She often says, What should I have done if I had put off preparation for death until now? Her mind is weak and confused. But all is well. The precious truths upon which her soul had been

dwelling for years, now stand forth clear and distinct before her mind, while the transient things of earth are fast receding from her view. She says she never had such clear views of the great plan of salvation, or of the fullness of redemption until now.

I have just returned from her dying room. As we talked of the joys of redeeming love, and of the holy and sainted spirits who have gone before to glory, it seemed almost as if the mortal vail was removed, and we could catch the distant echoes of the blending harps and voices "beyond the river." I stooped to catch a farewell word from her faltering lips. She threw her arms around my neck, and whispered she was almost there. "Almost there!" my heart still bounds with the thrilling import of those whispered words. Again and again

they come swelling through the chambers of my soul, like the far-off strains of twilight music, when the melody breathes of home. "Almost there," departing one; my soul mounts upward and onward, as on eagle's wings, until, with thee, I gaze upon the endless glories of the celestial city. And while we survey its jasper walls, its golden streets, its gates of pearl, together we bathe in its spirit, and taste its sacred delights. Mingling by faith with the countless host who are crowned with the victor's wreath, we join in the songs of praise, and the ascriptions of glory to the Lamb, who sitteth in the midst of the throne, till heaven, and Jesus, and God, seem all in all, and almost I forget that I am yet in the midst of life's conflict, with armor just burnished for the battle. "Almost there!" thou

loved one ; the last I shall ever see
or hear from thee ; for here we part.
Thou art entering thy rest : *I* must re-
turn to my labors.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

"O where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul?
'Twere vain the ocean's depths to sound,
Or pierce to either pole.

"The world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh;
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.

"There is a death whose pang,
Outlasts this fleeting breath;
O, what appalling horrors hang
Around the second death!"

AND now let me talk with the dear reader, who has been tracing with me the workings of grace in the hearts of my earliest friends. We have seen that one was brought to Jesus when toiling for her support among strangers, and then

we have seen her go down to death, in her childlike simplicity of faith, among the orchard flowers. And another we have seen acting, though at a late period, upon reasonable conviction, deliberately making God her choice, and then steadfastly making her way to the world of eternal rest, while her sister was saved as by fire, contending for her faith with the combined bewilderments of false philosophy, and the cunning devices of the wicked one. Another and another separated themselves from the world at an early age, and went forward, one to usefulness in life, and the other to a triumphant death. In all these diversities of character and circumstances we have seen displayed the goodness and wisdom of God, who has blessed them, and brought them into the way of life, and delivered them when

they were well-nigh fallen, just ready to be led captive forever.

But there are homes at Windmurmur which we have not entered, where dwelt other members of that child's class. We might linger for a time at the side of some manly contender in life's battle, or look into the hearts of others who have shut the Saviour out. In some of them we might find all that refines and ennobles the soul, but just the one thing needful to crown it with everlasting joy. We might lift the vail, and look in at the tumultuous waves of darkness and unrest which come surging up in hollow moanings from the depths of the soul that is unreconciled to God; but it is a sad and mournful sight, and we forbear.

And now let us talk about the dealings of God with thine own heart, my

reading friend. God has been faithfully and patiently instructing *you* also by his Spirit. And all the wants of your immortal nature have been urging you "to forsake earth's troubled waters for a purer spring." And now do I not hear you sigh, from the inmost depths of your heart, to be a Christian? A still, small voice reminds you that you are doing a great wrong in remaining away from God; and in prospect of death you feel that truly "it is a dread and awful thing to die," and shrink from looking into that eternity before you which promises nothing but "everlasting contempt," shut out from the presence of God, to dwell with the wicked forever. O, go not there! Does it not seem hard, even here on earth, for a little while, to be despised by all that is good and lovely, and to be

in the presence of the blasphemous and wicked, who are hateful, and continually hating one another? O, go not there, and make your dwelling-place forever with them. Turn away from them, and make up your mind for a better home. Decide to be the Lord's without any delay. Do I hear you say that you have been waiting for more conviction? Let it be burned into your memory *that the knowledge of the truth is conviction*; the conviction by which God will judge you; and can you ask for more to sink you like a millstone, down, down, into the terrible depths below? O, if you knew for what you were waiting, you would not ask for more conviction. O, make up your mind with what you have already, firmly and resolutely, to seek this great salvation. This is the first step, the

turning point in every Christian's life. It will be in yours. You must not have two minds about this thing, or you will receive nothing from the Lord. His promise is only to those who "*search for him with all their heart.*" And now the question is, Will you? And once for all, will you *begin now*? Will you decide before you lay down this book? for this is the point to which you must come. O, decide for Christ! Decide calmly, deliberately, with the heart and understanding; and let it be an *unalterable* decision. *Then* go forward in the strength of the Almighty; bear all the crosses, receive all the comforts of the pilgrim's lot, and, if it costs you your whole life, be faithful unto death.

But perhaps you have already made this happy choice. If you have, press on with patience and courage. If you

are faithful, you doubtless have much to contend with. But keep close to Jesus. He has done great things for you; he will do still greater. He can save and keep you to the end. True, this choice which you have made may cost you a great deal before you get the final victory. Be willing that it should. If it costs you everything, be sure that you will gain everything. Therefore press on by faith, and God will bless and make you a conqueror.

And at last, when the great gathering shall be made, when the friends of Jesus shall be called together to dwell with him on Mount Zion, may we be there, with robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

THE END.

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